TO: Dr. David F. Lewis – Muscogee County School District Superintendent

FROM: Madison Workman

RE: Overcoming Student Apathy in Muscogee County School District

Student apathy is a growing issue in our nation. Even within Muscogee County, teachers are experiencing difficulty with regards to student apathy in a variety of settings, grades, and subjects. Thus, I believe it would benefit all teachers within the county to attend a specific teacher training targeted toward putting an end to student apathy through increasing the rigor in the content, the relevancy of the curriculum, and the relationships between teachers and students. Specifically, I propose that teachers attend the Ron Clark Academy teacher training, which is held in Atlanta, Georgia every spring, summer, and fall. These training sessions allow teachers to observe master educators teaching classes, to attend several professional development workshops, and experience school culture, rigor, and student engagement, which is applicable to any subject and grade level. I propose that a few select teachers from each school in the district attend the Ron Clark Academy teacher-training workshop. This would allow the teachers to return to their school and share the knowledge they learned with their fellow teachers at a professional development meeting, which could be held at their local school.

Though I believe this is an extraordinary goal, I also believe it is attainable and would be highly beneficial to our school system. Realistically, this may not be feasible immediately. In the meantime, while we continue aiming for this goal, the county could hold a system-wide professional development day specifically for overcoming student apathy. Based on the current TKES rubric for the state of Georgia, as observed through the Georgia Department of Education, performance standard three asks teachers to promote “student learning by using research-based instructional strategies relevant to the content to engage students in active learning and to facilitate the students’ acquisition of key knowledge and skills.” The exemplary category for this specific standard focuses on student engagement and making the content relevant. According to Raymond McNulty and Russell Quaglia, “rigor, relevance, and relationships are three elements that provide the hallmark” for education (2007). Thus, I believe with the outstanding quality of teachers we have in the Muscogee County School District, each school should focus on standard three of the TKES rubric, which directly supports the idea that rigor, relevance, and relationships are the foundation for success in the classroom. Those teachers in each school who score at the exemplary level would be the model teachers. The other teachers in the school would then observe these teachers throughout the day and have a brief time, perhaps during that teacher’s planning if more time is not feasible, to discuss the engagement strategies that they use that are beneficial. This would allow for a teacher training that is similar to the Ron Clark Academy’s training to be held locally, which would reduce costs and absences until the main goal can be achieved.

To further discuss these proposed plans and determine feasibility between each of the proposed professional development activities, I would like to further discuss the specificities of each more in depth. At your earliest convenience, please contact me so that we may discuss these plans, their details, and hopefully come to a conclusion regarding an implementable blueprint for the next school year to put an end to student apathy, which is overtaking our graduation rates, assessment scores, and grades within the Muscogee County School District. Thank for your time.